

# CITY OF JERSEY CITY

JERRAMIAH T. HEALY  
MAYOR



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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## ***MAYOR HEALY TO WELCOME MOROCCAN DIGNITARY WITH KEY TO THE CITY Ceremony will Include City Hall's First Moroccan Flag Raising***

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy, members of the Municipal Council, and the Division of Cultural Affairs will raise the flag of Morocco for the first time at 3:30 p.m. on Friday, January 9, 2008, City Hall, 280 Grove Street.

“The diversity of Jersey City is growing immensely and that is something we continue to celebrate,” said Mayor Healy. “I take great pride in our city’s growth and progress and it is with great honor that I welcome our ambassadors from Morocco.”

For the first time in Jersey City’s history, City Hall will raise the **Moroccan flag** in honor of the community’s contributions to the City and raise awareness about the Moroccan culture. Mayor Healy will welcome the following dignitaries from the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco: Ms. Aicha Afifi, Deputy Chief of Mission, Mr. Driss Kassimi, Ministry Plenipotentiary, and Mr. Hassan Samrhouni, President of the Washington Morocco Club with the **Key to the City**.

**Morocco** is an ethnically diverse country with a rich culture and civilization. Throughout its history, **Morocco** hosted many people coming from the East, South, and North. It conceived various forms of beliefs ranging from Paganism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Morocco's strategic location has shaped its history. It is nestled on the northwestern tip of Africa, separated from the rest of the continent by the towering Atlas Mountains and by the Sahara itself. Morocco's location and resources led to early competition among European powers in Africa, beginning with successful Portuguese efforts to control the Atlantic coast in the 15th century.

In addition to the presentation of the key, Mayor Healy will acknowledge nationally licensed soccer coach **Alex Lalaoui** of the **Soccer Learning Center** who has worked tirelessly on charitable initiatives that support the community, particularly in areas of health and recreation. **Lalaoui** introduces both children and adults to the great sport of soccer in a small, team-centric environment. **Alex Lalaoui** also assisted the mission of Jack Burns, whose son is in an Army Unit in Iraq, in collecting close to 300 soccer balls for needy children living near his son’s unit. Lalaoui rallied his players, their families, community agencies and sports teams like the New Jersey Ironmen to assist the cause.

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Guests will enjoy delicious Moroccan tea compliments of the Marrakesh Restaurant in Parsippany while listening to traditional songs and music. This event is free and open to the public.

The event is co-sponsored by Royal Air Maroc and Washington-Morocco Club.

For further information regarding the Flag Raising, please contact the Division of Cultural Affairs at 201-547-6921.

**All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699.///**